

ACQUISITION CAREER EXPERIENCE PROGRAM PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION. These procedures are designed to be detailed descriptions of all actions and inter-relationships required to ensure the Acquisition Career Experience (ACE) Program is a success.

2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION. The Director of Acquisition Support Center (ASC) is charged with the responsibility for the implementation of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). Enacted in 1990, the purpose is to improve the effectiveness of the military and civilian acquisition workforce through enhanced education, training and career development, thereby improving the acquisition process. In order to develop future acquisition leaders who have the requisite knowledge, skills and leadership abilities for the 21st Century Army, the Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM), Headquarters Department of the Army and Headquarters U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC) augmented the Army Intern Program by establishing the ACE Program.

3. PURPOSE. The ACE Program is intended to recruit full-time, undergraduate, sophomore and junior college students into civilian acquisition workforce positions throughout the Army. Additionally, the goal is to give the students a realistic job preview and encourage them to consider the Department of the Army as a career choice after graduation. During the program, students will work with mentors to learn acquisition related issues and challenges. The ACE Program is a cost-effective opportunity to infuse new ideas into government programs and processes, while training our leaders of tomorrow.

4. OBJECTIVES.

a. The ACE Program is a comprehensive career development program designed to develop future acquisition leaders who have the requisite knowledge, skills and leadership abilities for the 21st Century by introducing college students into the Army's civilian Acquisition and Technology Workforce (A&TWF). This program will allow the Army Acquisition Corps to integrate highly competitive, motivated, educated and well-trained individuals into the acquisition workforce.

b. The program is intended to recruit and retain college students in their sophomore year through graduation. Entry level into the program normally begins at the GS-04 level. However, if a student does not meet the GS-04 requirements entry must be at the GS-03 level. Second year students are eligible to be promoted to the GS-05 level once they have satisfied promotion requirements and the host organization submits the request for personnel action for promotion. Completion from the ACE Program occurs when the ACE student has successfully completed all collegiate degree requirements and has completed, at a minimum, 640 work hours in the program.

5. RECRUITMENT.

a. Positions: During the first quarter of each fiscal year, a memorandum signed by the Regional Director, Customer Support Office (CSO), will be distributed to all local acquisition organizations within their respective regions soliciting potential positions for ACE students. Organizations who wish to participate in the ACE Program must submit a project description, identify the acquisition career field related to the position, and identify a mentor prior to the student's arrival. The ACE Project Description Form (Enclosure 1) must be submitted to the CSO prior to convening the ACE Selection Board, conducted early in the second quarter of the fiscal year.

b. Funding: The ASC will centrally fund the wages for a limited number of student positions each year. Budget estimates are calculated based upon the assumption that first year participants will meet the requirements to be hired at the GS-04, Step 01 level, and second year students at GS-05, Step 01. The Resource Management Division of the ASC will administer and manage the resources for ASC funded positions. Participating organizations that volunteer to fund ACE students are responsible for budgeting, administering, and managing all resources associated with the ACE positions and personnel actions.

c. Students: Students who are interested in applying for the ACE Program must submit an application package in accordance with published suspense dates and guidance. Information on the ACE Program is located on the ACE homepage at <http://dacm.rdaisa.army.mil/acepage/index.htm>. Only complete packages containing all required documents that are received by the announcement closing date will be accepted, and processed. Complete application packages should be mailed to the appropriate regional CSO, as published. Application packages mailed in government postage paid envelopes will not be processed. The application package consists of:

(1) Letter of Introduction -- one page, signed, includes information on citizenship, career goals, location preference, special interests, etc.

(2) Resume -- one page including social security number, date of birth, place of birth, and home and school address and telephone number.

(3) Unofficial Transcript -- including cumulative grade point average.

(4) Letter of Recommendation -- signed letter of recommendation from a college/university faculty member, with his/her position clearly stated.

d. Advertising, Brochures, and Local Recruitment: Regional CSOs are responsible for conducting recruitment efforts within their local areas. The ASC will provide a standard ACE brochure to ensure continuity in recruitment efforts. However, Regional CSO's have the liberty to augment with tailored flyers, etc., as needed. Recruitment efforts may include contacting local colleges/universities, attending job/career fairs and advertising the ACE Program throughout local communities.

e. Returning ACE Participants: Returning ACE students do not need to re-apply for the program. In order to return, students must officially be invited back by an ASC CSO, inform the CSO of their desire to return to the program, and provide the CSO with an updated transcript.

6. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. To be eligible to apply to the ACE Program, individuals must be:

a. Enrolled as a full-time, undergraduate student in good standing at an accredited educational institution.

b. A sophomore or junior year student (entering junior or entering senior year).
NOTE: Incoming ACE students are required to have completed 60 semester hours (2 academic years of post-high school study or an associates degree).

c. United States Citizen at the time of application.

d. Able to obtain a security clearance, if applicable.

7. STUDENT OPTIONS UPON DEGREE COMPLETION.

a. Students may be considered for non-competitive placement into an Army Intern Program, or other career positions, upon completion and verification (by a CPOC/CPAC representative) of 640 hours of qualifying work in the ACE Program.

b. Students must meet the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions for which he/she will be appointed. Qualifications determination will be made by a CPOC/CPAC representative.

c. If Army internship positions are available, ACE students must accept conversion to an Army internship program within 120 days after degree

completion. To be considered for a contracting position, students must also possess 24 semester hours of business related courses. Business related disciplines are defined as accounting, business finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, organization and management.

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d. Students who graduate with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or better may apply for Outstanding Scholar Program positions through the normal job announcement process.

8. SELECTION BOARDS.

a. Convening Authority: The convening authority for the ACE Selection Board is the Deputy Director, Acquisition Career Management (DDACM). The DDACM authorizes the convening and scheduling of boards, and may delegate the selection authority to local boards.

b. Selection Board: The ASC will convene the Selection Board, and it will be conducted annually at one of the regions. The board will identify high potential students based upon their application package and the requirements in the board memorandum of instruction.

c. Board Membership: The chairperson must be a member of Army Acquisition and Technology Workforce (A&TWF) and be at least the rank/grade of LTC/GS-14 or Broad Band Level [BBL] equivalent. The board will consist of four or five A&TWF members in the grade of Major/GS-13 or BBL equivalent or above.

d. Board Execution: The Selection Board will be briefed on the objectives of the ACE Program.

e. Rating Factors: The Selection Board will rate each applicant based on their letter of introduction, unofficial transcript, resume, and letter of recommendation from a faculty member.

(1) Letter of Introduction: Letters will be evaluated as an indicator of the applicant's ability to communicate in a business environment.

(2) Resume: Resumes will be evaluated for the nature, extent and breadth of the applicant's work experience. It is understood that students may not have an extensive work history. However, board members should look for indications of ability to work with others in a team environment, leadership, positions of responsibility, or other indicators of reliability and potential.

(3) Unofficial transcript: The applicant's transcript will be evaluated based on measures such as the cumulative grade point average, and curriculum.

(4) Letter of Recommendation: Letters of recommendation from faculty members should evidence personal, ethical and professional aspects of the candidates. However,

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since no format or guidance is given in advance as to what this letter should contain, it is possible that the faculty member writing the letter may not cover all of these areas.

f. Relative Standing List (RSL): Two RSLs are compiled for each region, one for business applicants, and the other for technical applicants. "Technical" is defined as engineering, scientific, and information technology. "Business" is defined as all other academic disciplines not defined as technical. When slating students to match positions, the RSL must be followed in rank order (from highest score to lowest) until either the list has been exhausted or all funded positions have been filled.

g. Notification of Selectees:

(1) Civilian Personnel Office: Only an authorized Human Resources Specialist from the local supporting Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC), or Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC), is authorized to officially notify selected applicants of their status, or to extend a formal job offer. The local servicing CPOC/CPAC is responsible for verifying that the applicant is qualified to fill the position, preparing and sending job offer letters, and ensuring that students receive pre-employment packages.

(a) GS-04 Requirements: Students must have completed 2 academic years of post-high school study or an associates degree, (60 semester hours).

(b) GS-05 Requirements: Students must have completed 3 academic years of post-high school study leading to a bachelors or higher degree (90 semester hours), and one period (320 hours) of GS-04 student trainee work in the ACE Program.

(2) Regional Directors: Regional Directors are responsible for preparing notification letters to be distributed to applicants informing them of their application status. Congratulatory letters can only be mailed after the student has been officially notified that they have been selected by the local servicing CPOC/CPAC.

h. Entry on Duty: The entry on duty date will be established by the servicing CPOC/CPAC, in coordination with the ACE applicant and organization to which they will be assigned.

i. Notification of Non-Selections: Regional Directors are responsible for informing non-selected applicants of their status. Non-select letters for students who have applied but not selected should be mailed to students as soon as the RSL is published and it is known they will not be extended a job offer. Non-select letters are to be signed by Regional Directors.

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9. PROGRAM EXECUTION.

a. Regional Directors will sponsor the ACE Program for the DACM. Acquisition Career Managers will facilitate the program, under the guidance of their Regional Director.

b. Host organizations are responsible for identifying a mentor to guide the ACE student during his/her program.

(1) Mentors must be members of the Acquisition & Technology Workforce (A&TWF) and be at least a GS-13, or Broad Band Level [BBL] equivalent or military equivalent. Mentors must also be Corps Eligible, or a member of the Army Acquisition Corps. Mentors should have the dedication to not only share their time with the student, but their knowledge as well. Mentors are required to attend a mentoring workshop that is conducted prior to the arrival of students, and an end of summer wrap-up session.

(2) Mentors will train, assign tasks, and provide advice to the students during their rotations and serve as a model for the student to emulate. Mentors are responsible for preparing the Student Support Form (Enclosure 2), which informs the student of what their duties are and what is expected of them, the student's evaluation form (Enclosure 3) which documents their performance, and maintaining the student's cumulative timesheet.

(3) Mentors are responsible for ensuring the student has, or receives information on, the following: identification badge, building badge, vehicle registration, security clearance packages, parking permits, a workstation and all necessary equipment (i.e. computer, telephone, etc.).

(4) Mentors are responsible for conducting organizational orientation to include guidance on security procedures, office etiquette, appropriate dress, and time and attendance reporting.

c. Host organizations will be responsible for funding any travel and/or training expenses.

10. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.

a. Entry on Duty: Once the student has received and accepted an official job offer from an authorized Human Resources Specialist, the ASC CSO will notify the host organization, who in turn should notify the mentor.

(1) Incoming ACE students are brought onboard at the GS-04 grade if they have completed 2 academic years of post-high school study or an associate's degree,(60 semester hours).

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(2) Second-year ACE students, in accordance with the Student Educational Employment Program (SEEP) authority, can be promoted to the GS-05 grade when he/she has completed 3 academic years of post-high school study leading to a bachelors or higher degree (90 semester hours), and one period (320 hours) of GS-04 student trainee work in the ACE Program.

b. Training Agreements: The Regional ASC CSO is responsible for obtaining signatures on ACE Training Agreements and furnishing copies to local CPOC/CPAC prior to students entry on duty (Enclosure 4).

c. In-processing: The local supporting CPOC/CPAC is responsible for general in-processing of students. CPOC/CPAC will notify and inform the student of the time and location for in-processing. The regional ASC CSO will conduct an ACE student orientation session for students and mentors following official in-processing.

d. CPOC/CPAC Responsibilities:

(1) Process requests for personnel actions (RPA) as "excepted appointments" with a NTE date in accordance with SEEP Authority.

(2) Conduct official in-processing of students.

(3) Ensure the personnel action is coded and entered into the Modern Defense Civilian Personnel Data System.

(4) Execute appropriate personnel actions, as necessary.

e. Photograph Release Form: Only group photos taken during program activities will be used when promoting the ACE Program. Regional CSOs are responsible for obtaining student signatures on the photograph release form. (Enclosure 5).

f. Evaluations: Every ACE student will be evaluated on his/her overall performance at the conclusion of summer rotation by supervisor or mentor. Evaluations will be documented on the ACE Student Evaluation Form (Enclosure 3). This form is to be completed no later than 5 days prior to the student's departure and a signed copy forwarded to the regional CSO. The regional CSOs will maintain a copy of all evaluations. Less than favorable evaluations may preclude a student from being invited to return to participate in the ACE Program the following year.

g. Completion of First Year: The student and mentor will coordinate an acceptable date to complete his/her rotation and will work closely with the Regional ASC CSOs to submit required paperwork to the supporting CPOC/CPAC. Paperwork must be submitted to the CPOC/CPAC at least 14 days prior to the effective date. If resources and project assignments are available, the student may be invited to return during school Winter and

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Spring breaks. An RPA must be processed to place the student on a leave without pay status if the student is invited and intends to return as a participant for the second year, or return for duty during school breaks. If the student does not intend to return to the program then an RPA will be processed to effect the resignation.

h. Completion of Second/Final Year: Students interested in continuing employment with the Federal Government must indicate so prior to the conclusion of their second, and final, year of participation in the ACE Program.

11. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM. Identification of issues and/or problems, as well as successes, is essential to the success of the ACE Program. Lessons learned from the board process will be used to identify problems and institute solutions to improve future boards. Both the students and mentors will be requested to provide feedback to ASC program coordinators at the conclusion of each summer. Feedback will be used by the DDACM and ASC Regional Directors to determine changes deemed necessary to improve the ACE Program.

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Colonel, SC
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Acquisition Career Management

Enclosures:

1. ACE Project Description Form
2. Student Support Form
3. Student Evaluation Form
4. Training Agreement
5. Photo Release Form